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their art, and Buonarrotti had highly praised Correggio's work at Parma, particularly the cupola at St. John; criticising the drawing at the same time. How Correggio, mortified, had confessed he had seen none of Michael's paintings; the latter exclaiming, "Then you must come to Rome! you must see my Sistine chapel! you will understand it." How Correggio had shown him Julio's picture, which the noble Florentine gazed upon long and earnestly; then with manifestations of deep delight, had returned to Correggio's own paintings—for instance, the Io and the Leda, and the Madonna with St. George; bursting out at length with the exclamation—"Yes, you understand it!" With great difficulty had he (Rossi) and Correggio been able at last to persuade the enthusiast to ride with them to Pietola.

The Duke, apparently satisfied, dismissed the Marchese, and returning to his place, renewed his conversation of the three great masters. Suddenly Castiglione approached the group, and laying his hand on Correggio's shoulder, said, "Master Allegri, a word with you."

Allegri rose, and bowing to the Duke, withdrew with the Count, who led him towards the place occupied by Prince Cosmo, and in presence of the fair Isaura, said, in a friendly tone, "The Prince and I rejoice at the acknowledgment you have to-day received from the great Buonarrotti, which has the more increased our wish, to have as soon as possible in our possession, the portrait of the Princess, by your hand. Tell us, then, when you think you can have it ready for us."

"The picture of the Princess is finished," answered Correggio carelessly, but he immediately repented his precipitation, when, not only the Prince and the Count, but Isaura herself, exclaimed with one voice—"How—finished!" and then added—"and when shall we have it?"

"Oh," said the painter, embarrassed and correcting himself,—"not finished, I should have said: the portrait of the Princess is spoiled, and I have had to rub it out."

"Heaven help us!" cried the Prince, "spoiled!"

"And will you begin afresh with the sittings?" asked Castiglione with ill concealed displeasure.

Before Correggio could reply, Michael Angelo, who, looking towards the speakers, had caught a glimpse of Isaura, cried, "By St. Lucas, Allegri! there sits your Madonna, from the picture of St. George, bodily before you, as I live! Ha, you cunning rogue! you are as bad as Raphael; you paint, instead of the Mother of God, your own mistress, whom you thus make the pious people worship!"

Isaura grew pale, and looked bewildered at Correggio, who answered without embarrassment, "You are mistaken, Master Angelo;

my Madonna, indeed, resembles this lovely original; she is not, however, my mistress, but the affianced bride of Count Castiglione, the Princess Isaura Cosmo, of the house of Medici."

"Indeed!" muttered Buonarrotti, and smiling, he looked away. But Castiglione, trembling with passion, seized Allegri's hand, pressed it significantly, and whispered to him in a choked voice,

"We will speak together at the end of the banquet."

Correggio started, and seemed at first not to understand the Count, but a glance at Isaura, who sat blushing crimson, made him comprehend all, and looking quietly in the Count's face, he replied,—"As you command!" went back to his place, and was the gayest of the gay, the rest of the evening.

[CONCLUDED NEXT WEEK.]

A NEW ENGLAND CHOIR FIFTY YEARS AGO.

BY A MEMBER.

At the period when this recital commences, the long established leader, Mr. Pitchtone, had just removed with his family to one of the new towns in the district of Maine, and the choir, which had been for some time in a decaying state, was thus left without any head, or any hope of keeping itself together. For some Sundays after his departure not an individual ventured to appear in the singing seats. Young Williams, the eccentric and interesting shoemaker, who was an apprentice to his father, knew perfectly well how to set the tune, but he had not yet acquired sufficient self-confidence to pass the leading notes round to the performers of different parts, nor to encounter various other kinds of intimidating notoriety attached to the office.

The female singers, besides, had been so long and so implicitly accustomed to their late leader, that nothing could induce them to submit to the control of so young and inexperienced a guide. And as no other member of the congregation possessed sufficient skill or firmness to undertake this responsible and conspicuous task, the consequence was, that nearly all the performers at first, absented themselves, not only from the singing gallery, but even from church. Most of them had been so long habituated to their elevated position, and their active duty in the place of worship, that they could not immediately undergo the awkwardness of sitting below among the congregation, and were not a little apprehensive of meeting the stare of mingled curiosity and reproach, which they knew would be directed towards them. In addition to these circumstances, many had not the heart to witness the embarrassment and pain which would naturally be created in the minister and his flock, by the anticipated chasm in the usual routine of worship.

Two or three, however, of the more courageous in the late choir, ventured to attend church, even on the first Sabbath after the removal of Mr. Pitchtone.

They went, indeed, at a very early hour, for the purpose of avoiding notice, and took

their seats in some unappropriated pews in a very distant, and almost invisible quarter of the gallery.

The entire congregation having assembled, the clergyman waited some time for the accustomed appearance of the sons and daughters of sacred song. It is almost universally the practice throughout our New England country churches, to commence public worship with the singing of a psalm or hymn. On the present occasion, no person being ostensibly ready to perform that duty, the minister began the service with the "long prayer." Yet, when this was concluded, an imperious necessity occurred of making at least the attempt to diversify and animate the business of the sanctuary by an act of melody. Accordingly, the Rev. Mr. Welby announced and read the psalm adapted to the subject of the sermon which was to succeed. Then, having waited a moment or two, during which a most painful silence and suspense pervaded the congregation, he began, in a voice naturally strong and clear, to sing the psalm alone, still keeping his usual standing position in the centre of the pulpit. Only one voice was heard to support him. It was that of the venerable deacon, who sat immediately beneath and who hummed a broken kind of bass, without the accompaniment of words, there being scarcely a hymn book in the lower part of the meeting-house. The same scene occurred in the afternoon, with the slight addition of a female voice in some part of the house, which lent its modest, unskillful, and half-suppressed assistance through the concluding portion of the hymn.

Matters went on nearly in this way for the space of a month, at the end of which the singing began to improve a little, by the gradual return to church, though not to the singing gallery, of the stragglers who had composed the late choir, and who were now willing to join in the vocal duties of worship under the auspices of the pastor. At length, when about six months had been thus dragged along, an occasion offered for a return to the deserted gallery, in a manner which might somewhat shelter the mortification and inspire the confidence of the rallied choristers.

A Mr. Ebed Harrington, who had recently removed into the village for the purpose of studying medicine with the physician of the place, had some pretensions on the musical score. He was an unmarried man, of about the age of thirty years, and had been, until this period, a hard-working laborer on his father's farm, which was situated in an obscure township in New Hampshire. His complexion of the darkest; his face exactly circular; his eyes small, black, and unmeaning; his form thick-set, and the joints of his principal limbs had been contracted by nature or use into inflexible angles of considerable acuteness. He defrayed the expenses of his board and medical tuition by laboring agriculturally, the half of every day, for his teacher, Dr. Saddlebags. The other half of the day, and a large portion of the night, were industriously devoted by our incipient Æsculapius to the study of his chosen profession, with the exception of a few evenings which he occasionally spent at different places in the neighborhood. It was on one of these visits that he found means to exhibit some imposing specimens of his abilities in the performance of sacred music. And having suggested that he had often taken the lead in the choir of his native place, he al-

most immediately received a pressing invitation from some of the most active of the singers in Waterfield, to place himself at their head on the following Sabbath, and thus enable them to supply the lamentable vacancy which existed in the apparatus of worship at their meeting-house. The invitation was accepted. That quarter of the singing-seats devoted to the female sex was filled at an early hour on the next Sabbath morning, by fair occupants, furnished, generally, each with her hymn book, and waiting with some impatience for the other moiety of the choir to arrive, and for the services to begin. The body of male performers gradually assembled at one corner of the building, out of doors, and discussed several particulars relating to the important movement which was now about to take place. One difficulty that staggered them was, the manner in which their new leader should be introduced into the singing gallery. He himself modestly suggested the propriety of being conducted by some one of the gentlemen singers to the spot. But besides that there was not an individual in the circle who considered himself clothed with sufficient authority, or who felt sufficient confidence in himself, to enact so grave a ceremony, it appeared to be the general opinion that Mr. Harrington, in virtue of his newly-conferred office, should march into church at the head of the choir. While they were debating this point with no little earnestness, the time was sliding rapidly away. All the rest of the congregation, even to the last tardy straggler, had entered and taken their seats. An impatient and wondering stillness mantled over the whole assemblage within, and Mr. Welby was on the point of rising to announce the psalm, at the hazard of whatever consequences might ensue, when, by a sudden, spontaneous, and panic-like movement, which I cannot remember who of us began, the tuneful collection without, suspended their debate, and rushed in a body into the front door of the meeting-house. Part of us turned off immediately into the right aisle, and part to the left. The stairs leading to the gallery were placed at the end of each of these aisles, at two corners of the building within, so that whoever mounted them was exposed to the view of the congregation. With a hurried and most earnest solemnity, the choristers made their trampling way up these stairs, and soon found themselves in a large octagonal pew in the centre of the gallery. Each individual occupied the seat which he could first reach, and Mr. Harrington, without being offered the seat usually assigned the leader, was fain, in the general confusion and forgetfulness of the scene, to assume about four inches of the edge of a bench contiguous to the door of the pew. Here, while wiping from his brow, with a red dotted calico handkerchief, the perspiration which the anxiety and exertions of the moment had profusely excited, the voice of the clergyman in the pulpit restored him and his fellow-singers to the calm of recollection, and fixed all eyes around upon him as their legitimate guide.

The tune which he selected was well adapted to the hymn announced. Everybody remembers "Wells." Mr. Harrington had forgotten to take a pitch-pipe with him to the place of worship, and there was, accidentally, no instrument of any kind present. He was therefore obliged to trust to his ear, or rather to his fortune, for the pitch of the leading note. The fourth note in the tune of

"Wells" happens to be an octave above the first. Unluckily, Mr. Harrington seized upon a pitch better adapted to this fourth note than the first. The consequence was, that in leading on the tune, to the words, "Life is the time," he executed the first three notes with considerable correctness, though with not a little straining; but in attempting to pronounce the word *time*, he found that nature had failed to accommodate his voice with a sound sufficiently high for the purpose. The rest of the tenor voices were surprised into the same consciousness. Here then he was brought to an absolute stand, and with him the whole choir, with the exception of two or three of the most ardent singers of the bass and treble, whose enthusiasm and earnestness carried them forward nearly through the first line, before they perceived the calamity which had befallen their head-quarters. They now reluctantly suffered their voices, one after another to drop away, and a dead silence of a moment ensued. Mr. Harrington began again, with a somewhat lower pitch of voice, and with stepping his feet a little back, as if to leap forward to some imaginary point; but still with no greater success. A similar catastrophe to the former awaited this second attempt.

The true sound for the word *time* still remained far beyond the utmost reach of his falsetto. In this third effort he was more fortunate, since he hit upon a leading note which brought the execution of the whole tune just within the compass of possibility, and the entire six verses were discussed with much spirit and harmony.

When the hymn was finished, the leader and several of his more intimate acquaintances exchanged nods and smiles with each other, compounded of mortification and triumph,—mortification at the mistakes with which the singing had begun, and triumph at the spirited manner in which it was carried on and concluded. This foolish and wicked practice is indulged in too many choirs, by some of the leading singers, who ought to set a better example to their fellow choristers, and compose themselves into other than giggling and winking frames of mind, at the moment when a whole congregation are about to rise or kneel in a solemn act of praise and prayer.

The greater part of the interval between the first and second singing, which was occupied by the minister and the devout portion of his hearers in a high and solemn communion with the Deity, was devoted by Mr. Harrington and his associates above mentioned, to turning over the leaves of the Village Harmony, and making a conditional choice of tune next to be performed, according to the metre of the hymn which might be read. When the time arrived for their second performance, although Mr. Harrington was more happy than before, in catching the true keynote of the air, yet, either from some deficiency of science in himself, or from a misapprehension on the part of those who sung bass, this important department of the choir began the hymn with a note which happened to be the most discordant of the whole scale. The consequence was dreadful to every one within hearing who was afflicted with a good ear. Our Coryphæus interposed his authority to produce silence, by emitting through his teeth a loud and protracted hush! After some little difficulty, they succeeded in starting fairly, and carried on the performance

with due harmony of tones. In the afternoon Mr. Harrington was at his post as settled leader of the choir. It is true that he found himself surrounded by only about half the number of assistants, who had attended the commencement of his vocal career in the morning. But no one had ventured to insinuate to him his incompetency, and several of the singers charitably ascribed his mistakes to the accidental absence of the pitch pipe, and to the modest trepidation which arose from his first appearance. His principal mistake on the latter part of the day, was that of selecting a common metre. He perceived not his error until he arrived at the end of the second line, when finding that he had two more syllables to render into music, he at first attempted to eke out the air by a kind of flourish of his own, in a suppressed and hesitating voice. But he was soon convinced that this would never do. Had he been entirely alone, he might in this way have carried the hymn through, trusting to his own musical resources and invention. But it was out of his power to inspire the other singers with the foreknowledge of the exact notes which his genius might devise and append to every second line. They too, must try their skill to the same purpose, and while the whole choir, tenor, bass and treble, were each endeavoring to eke out the line with their own efforts and happy flourishes, a tremendous clash of discord and chaos of uncertainty involved both the leader and the led together. There was nothing in this dilemma, therefore, for him to do, except to stop short at once and select a new tune. This he did with much promptness and apparent composure, though that there was some little flutter in his bosom was evident from the circumstance that the tune he again pitched upon, contrary to all rules in the course of a single Sabbath, was Wells, which, however, went off with much propriety, and none of the interruptions that had marred its performance in the morning.

There are many of the thorough-bred sons of New England, whose perseverance it takes much greater discouragements to daunt than befell the efforts of Mr. Ebed Harrington on this memorable day. He regarded himself now as the fully-installed leader of the choir in Waterfield; a function which he inflexibly maintained, through good report and through evil report, sometimes amidst almost entire desertion, and at other times with a very respectable band to follow his guidance, until his professional studies were completed, and he himself removed from the neighborhood, to plunge into some of the newly-settled territories for an establishment, and introduce perchance, the arts of healing and melody together. I have never heard one word of his destination or subsequent success. — [*Musical Gazette*.]

The Paris press says that the Hymn to the Emperor, which was produced with mediocre effect at the Grand Exposition, will soon be given to the public at the Opera with splendid execution.

The musical bands remaining in Paris are soon to duplicate their doings at the Palais de l'Industrie for the benefit of the general public, and to give those a chance who held tickets for the trial, and could not get in.

A new operetta, *The Exploits of Silvestre*, by MM. de Sograt and Naugeot, has been performed in distinguished private circles in Paris with great success.